

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on May 2, 2008
SGW Campus H-769, 10.a.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Roger Côté (Chair), Mr. David Baker (Secretary), Ms. Anna Barrafato, Mr. Zach Battat, Mr. Majid Behbahani, Mr. Elie Chivi, Mr. William Curran, Ms. Lyne Denis (on behalf of Mr. Jean Brisebois), Ms. Melanie Drew, Dr. Sup Mei Graub, Ms. Erica Jabouin, Ms. Marilyn Lessard, Ms. Lina Lipscombe, Mr. Jermaine McFarlane, Mr. Owen Moran, Ms. Elizabeth Morey, Dr. Monica Mulrennan, Mr. Steven Rosenshein, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Mr. Noah Stewart, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi, Ms. Ruirui Zhu

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Ms. Daniela Caputo, Ms. Katherine Hedrich, Dr. Fran Shaver, Mr. Jaewoo Kim,

GUESTS: Me. Pierre Frégeau, Ms. Arielle Jessop, Ms. Rosine Jodoin, Mr. Danny Kane, Ms. Louyse Lussier, Mr. Josh Redler, Ms. Catherine Reimer

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Stewart moved to approve the agenda and Ms. Drew seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed Ms. Jabouin and Mr. Rosenshein to Council. Ms. Jabouin replaced Ms. del Vecchio who resigned from Council and Mr. Rosenshein was appointed by the CSU to fill the last remaining vacant position on CCSL. The Chair announced that as Mr. Curran is retiring this would be his last CCSL meeting. The Chair took the opportunity to thank Mr. Curran for his dedication to CCSL and to Library Services.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF APRIL 4, 2008

Ms. Toscano asked that the minutes be revised to reflect the fact that she was in attendance at the last meeting. Mr. Stewart moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Stanbra seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Ethical Purchasing

Mr. Kane, Manager Merchandising for the Bookstore spoke about Concordia's ethical purchasing practices. Mr. Kane explained that universities began to take notice of this issue during the Nike controversies in the early 2000s when Universities realized they had a responsibility regarding ethical purchasing. Universities in Canada formed a Western and an Eastern Association, which soon merged into one National association to tackle these issues. A code of conduct, with input from students, was developed and vendors were asked to supply the

Campus Stores Canada (CSC) with their codes to ensure they adhered to CSC policies. Mr. Kane highlighted some of the issues the Bookstore has been working on:

- Everything at the store will be BPA free, number 7 bottles in particular
 - Availability of bamboo and organic shirts
 - Recycling of binders and lab coats.

Mr. Stewart asked about the possibility of better labeling to inform students which products were ethically purchased. Ms. Morey suggested displaying signs that indicate that items sold were ethically purchased

rather than labels on each item. Mr. Kane said he hoped to have a webpage up by the fall semester describing the Bookstore's "green" practices.

Mr. Stewart asked Ms. Sheahan if the Athletics department had similar green purchasing practices. Ms. Sheahan responded that as not all of their products are sourced by the Bookstore, she will look into the specifics and get back to Mr. Stewart.

4.2 Poster Policy

Faculty umbrella associations were invited to attend the CCSL meeting to give their input in the discussion of the CSU's proposed changes to the poster policy. Me. Pierre Frégeau, Legal Counsel, was also invited to answer questions on censorship, ownership of posters and translation of posters. The following issues were raised:

- Once a poster is stamped it becomes the property of the CSU and can be removed without notice or compensation. The intention was to make "posting" a privilege not a right. Me. Frégeau explained that if a poster is stamped and posted then the group has the right to post it.
 - Legal Counsel to be responsible for denying posters that the CSU decide are offensive. Me. Frégeau respectfully declined and indicated that student complaints concerning posters are currently handled through the Dean of Students Office and this process should continue.
 - It was agreed that the logo of the sponsoring association should appear on any poster being displayed.
 - Translations to be required for posters in a language other than French or English. Me. Frégeau said this requirement would dictate that the CSU could only accept **certified** translations.

Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mr. Rosenshein, put forth the following motion:

BIRT CCSL approve the creation of a committee to review the poster policy. The committee will consist of two members of CCSL and two members of other umbrella associations (ASFA, ECA, FASA, CASA). The Chair would be the Dean of Students or an individual appointed by the Dean of Students.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rosenshein asked Council why poster boards are being removed without warning. Ms. Morey responded that Facilities Planning contacted the Dean of Students Office for permission to *move* boards but instead had them removed. The Dean of Students Office is looking into this matter.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Ms. Morey briefly discussed "The Co-curricular Report Card". As this exists at many Canadian universities a review of the program is being conducted to see how it could be implemented at Concordia.

6. STUDENT LIFE ISSUES

6.1 Gender Neutral Washrooms

A discussion ensued on the motion by Mr. Stewart concerning Gender Neutral Washrooms distributed to Council prior to the CCSL meeting. The CSU would like 25 washrooms at the downtown campus and 13 washrooms at Loyola to be refurbished as gender neutral washrooms and asked that the remaining Walksafe funds in the amount of \$26,000 be allocated to support this initiative. As The Chair explained that there is only \$15,188 left in this account, Mr. Stewart asked that the motion be revised to reflect that \$15,000 from the WalkSafe fund and an additional \$11,060 from the 07-08 year-end Special Projects projected surplus be allocated for the gender-neutral washroom expenses. A revised motion by Mr. Stewart and seconded by Mr. Rosenshein was put forth:

*Whereas Concordia is a progressively minded institution which actively encourages and supports diverse student populations;
Whereas CCSL wishes to recognize the universal access provided by "gender neutral washrooms" as an essential component of student services;*

Whereas Concordia currently has no such washrooms in the Sir George Williams Campus' main building, the Henry F. Hall building, or on the Loyola campus;

BIRT \$15,000 be allocated from the remaining Walksafe fund and \$11,060 from the 07-08 year-end surplus in the Special Project Account to support the creation of gender-neutral washrooms on both campuses.

The motion passed unanimously

6.2 International Tuition Fee Increase

Mr. Stewart spoke to The Motion concerning increase to tuition for international students that was distributed to Council prior to the CCSL meeting.

Whereas there are almost 4,000 international students that study at Concordia each year;
Whereas international students' presence brings social, cultural and intellectual diversity to Concordia, thereby enriching the education of all students;
Whereas international students already pay more than the cost of their education;
Whereas the Concordia University Board of Governors, at its March 31st 2008 meeting, considered a proposal to raise international tuition fees by over \$1,000;
Whereas the official vote on this proposal was proposed because of concerns expressed by many governors about the potential negative impacts it would have on the entire university community;
Whereas in just a week over 3,000 Concordia students signed a petition protesting this proposed tuition fee increase;
Whereas this increase will lead to many students abandoning their dreams of obtaining a University degree, while others will see their academic performance drop due to being forced to work longer hours;
Whereas representatives from the Fine Arts Student Alliance, Arts and Science Federation of Associations, Engineering and Computer Science Association and the Commerce and Administration Student Association have called on the Board to reject the proposed increase;
Whereas the Graduate Students Association has mirrored the CSU's call for the Board to refuse this proposed increase;
Whereas the CCSL may make recommendations to the Board of Governors;
Whereas rising international tuition fees constitute a serious threat to student life at Concordia;

BIRT that the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL) recommend that Concordia University's Board of Governors refuse any proposal to increase international tuition fees.

Mr. Stewart felt that the raising of international fees was a dangerous proposal and distributed letters of support from Ms. Angelica Novoa, President of the CSU; the Canadian Association of University Teachers and Dr. Henry Habib, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Political Science. He also read e-mails from international students attesting to the fact that their studies here would be in jeopardy if tuition were raised. Mr. Stewart stated that it is clear that the University has a deficit, as do most other Canadian universities, but the international tuition increase will not provide enough funds to make a significant contribution to solving the problem.

Mr. Behbahani, Ms. Zhu and Mr. Chivi each spoke on behalf of international students and supported the motion explaining that they felt international students already have a significant financial burden.

Ms Drew stated that she was not comfortable with the language as it inferred that there was factual information supporting the motion. She questioned the validity of the statement that international education would deteriorate with an increase in tuition and asked if there was research data to support the statement. Mr. Stewart said that Statistics Canada did have stats on many of the issues brought up in the motion. For those that had no supporting research, he felt that testimonials from students were enough to determine that these were not simply perceptions.

Ms. Stanbra was also concerned with the wording of the motion and felt that it was not the role of CCSL to dictate a price structure for the University. She suggested that Student Services could find tangible ways to support international students such as the creation of bursaries. Dr. Graub agreed and added that as the University recruits international students, there is a responsibility to ensure that there is also a support system in place.

Ms Sheahan stressed the importance that any motion approved by CCSL is within the CCSL mandate and realm of responsibility. Ms Sheahan also explained that it was important to understand, that although concern had been expressed with the text of the motion as tabled, it did not mean that Council members

were necessarily in favour of a tuition increase or not sympathetic to the issues facing international students.

Ms. Sheahan suggested the CCSL consider the possibility of a message from CCSL to the Board of Governors that had a direct impact on supporting international students, for example:

Whereas the Concordia University Board of Governors is considering an increase in international student fees,

Whereas, should there be an increase in said fees, the financial impact on some international students may cause financial hardship that could have a negative impact on their ability to successfully complete their studies,

Whereas the Concordia Council on Student Life's mandate includes:

- To act upon social and educational issues affecting student life
 - To make recommendations to the Board of Governors regarding the quality of student life
 - To establish clear priorities for student life and services
 - To initiate necessary research and establish the necessary committees for its functioning

Whereas CCSL is concerned about and committed to ensuring that all students receive the services and support required for their full participation in their education,

BIRT the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL) recommends to the Board of Governors that, should an international student fee increase be approved, steps be taken immediately to address any possible negative impact on present and future international students through the establishment of a CCSL working group made up of CCSL members to identify and implement special initiatives to address including, but not limited to, the establishment of a need-based bursary fund.

Mr. Behbahani suggested a secret ballot be called. Mr. Rosenshein was opposed to this. Mr. Stewart called for a roll call vote. The motion as proposed by Mr. Stewart was put to a vote:

FOR: (8) Mr. Stewart, Mr. Behbahani, Mr. Chivi, Mr. Battat, Ms. Zhu, Ms. Jabouin, Mr. Rosenshein, Mr. McFarlane

AGAINST: (9) Ms. Stanbra, Ms. Sheahan, Ms. Morey, Ms. Drew, Ms. Barrafato, Dr. Graub, Mr. Moran, Dr. Mulrennan, Ms. St-Laurent

The motion did not pass.

Mr. Stewart stated for the record that he was disgusted by this vote. All students voted for the motion and all the administration voted against the motion.

Mr. Rosenshein disputed the fact that the Dean of Students was given a vote. The Chair explained that the Dean of Students is normally the Chair of The Concordia Council on Student Life. However in the absence of a Dean of Students, Mr. Côté assumed the role of Acting Chair for the academic year 2007-2008. As normally Mr. Côté has a voting seat on Council, Ms. Lussier replaced his voting seat for this academic year (June 2007-May 2008). As the position of Dean of Students was only filled by Ms. Morey at the end of February, Mr. Côté continued in his role as Acting Chair for the academic year 2007-2008. Upon Ms. Morey's arrival in February, she assumed Ms. Lussier's seat on CCSL. As such, Ms. Morey does indeed have a voting seat on Council.

6.3 Special Project Funding

Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mr. Chivi put forth the following motion:

Whereas the CCSL Special Projects Fund ended the year with over \$40,000 left;
Whereas the CSU had applied for \$20,000 to help pay for the 2007/2008 speaker series;

Whereas the amount requested was based both on the financial need of the Series and on amounts allocated by CCSL to similar projects in the past;

Whereas the CSU was only given roughly \$6,000 for this series;

Whereas there were procedural problems with the original allocation of this funding;

BIRT \$13,500 of the funds leftover in the CCSL Special Projects Fund be allocated to the CSU for the 2007/2008 speaker series

BIFRT a committee be struck to create a set of guidelines for allocation special project funding to be brought back to CCSL at the September meeting.

The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Stewart said that the guidelines for Special Projects are awkward and that the committee was too stringent in allocating money this year. He is opposed to the fact that the committee did not consider expenses such as honoraria, travel and accommodation. Ms. Lussier, who was Chair of the sub-committee this year, agreed that the guidelines were somewhat vague and should be revisited. Ms. Morey confirmed that the Dean of Students would be proceeding with plans to undertake a review.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rosenshein asked about the state of H-110, specifically the seating. The Chair said that there are discussions at the present moment of doing a retrofit to H-110. As Ms. Boujaklian was not at Council to speak to this issue, the Chair said he would follow on this issue and communicate back to Council through the list serve.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be announced.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Dr. Graub motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Stanbra seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.